DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 051 478 AC 010 388

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|---|---|
| AUTHOR | Rivera, William M. |
| TITLE | "Futures": A New and Needed Literature for National and International Planning in Continuing Education. |
| PUB DATE | Jun 71 |
| NOTE | 18p.; Paper presented at International Seminar on Publications in Continuing Education (Syracuse University, June 8-10, 1971) |
| EDRS PRICE | EDRS Price MF-$0.65 HC Not Available from EDRS. |
| DESCRIPTORS | *Adult Education, *Continuous Learning, *Educational Needs, *Educational Planning, Federal Aid, *Post Secondary Education |

ABSTRACT

The futures of continuing education are discussed from the standpoint of educational planning for the future. Techniques that are being used in formulating futures environments are described, and a model of Federal policy options/goals in post-secondary education in the years 1970-85 is presented as a cross-impact matrix (Annex I). A scenario of the futures of the field of education, emphasizing out-of-school educational programs, is presented as Annex II. This scenario consists of statements of precepts and concepts concerning education, a statement of general conviction concerning education, a statement of general need, a statement of specific need, a newsworthy event regarding need, a shift of social value, a statement of goal, a newsworthy event regarding program, and a statement of personal values. A bibliography of futures literature is included. (DB)

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# "FUTURES": A NEW AND NEEDED LITERATURE FOR NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL PLANNING IN CONTINUING EDUCATION

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International Seminar on Publications
in Continuing Education

Minnowbrook Conference Center
Syracuse University
Syracuse, New York

June 8-10, 1971

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# "FUTURES":
# A NEW AND NEEDED LITERATURE FOR NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL PLANNING IN CONTINUING EDUCATION

by

William M. Rivera

Educational futures research is mainly of a national character, but "futures perspectives" are also being developed at the international level. International futures thinking is especially important since problems exist which the social sciences cannot deal with within the framework of individual national systems. Furthermore, the world's educational problems (like many of its other problems) are beginning to be seen as interrelated more closely among nations than ever before. Finally, international conclusions may help policy makers at the national levels understand their particular country's educational problems and direction with greater clarity.

Futures literature in continuing education is at once a new and necessary development, at both national and international levels. Although thinking about the future in a reasoned way may not eliminate our irrational convictions, it may nevertheless push us to envision alternative futures and thereby help us in deciding more concretely what measure of intention we will employ to make and to implement our choice of a future.

The present success of continuing education as a theory of education and as a practice within and outside the formal education system underlines the importance of thinking about its future(s). By "the future" we mean that one which will actually take place as opposed to "futures," which are the alternatives we now confront. In recent years a large volume of writing has focused on the futures of education, much of which is pertinent to the theory and practice of continuing education. An overwhelming amount of literature has been devoted to educational planning, with continuing education as a built-in notion and a desired goal. Increasingly, books and articles are concerned with the trends, issues and implications of continuing education.

A 223-page annotated bibliography on Alternative Futures for Learning (Marien, 1971) has appeared which includes a section containing 21 items

(mainly from American sources) on "Adult and Continuing Education." At the International Conference on Educational Planning (Unesco, 1968), the Final Report stated that educational planning "must be comprehensive in character . . . because of the close relationship which must be established with the planning of general development and because it must at the same time embrace all levels and types of education within what should be a process of life-long education for youth and adults alike." Also, an enormous working draft on Educational Planning and Policy: An International Bibliography (Webster, 1969) has appeared which is studded with references to books and articles whose titles speak of "planning," "social change," "trends," "potential," and "implications."

Educational planning, of necessity--whether nationally or internationally--addresses itself to the future. Such planning may be based on very different modes of thinking about the future. For example (Ziegler, 1970):

1) The Future as the Present (as though the problems of the present will be those of the future)
2) The Future as an Extrapolation of the Present
3) The Future as a Single Alternative to the Present
4) The Future in Technological Terms
5) The Future in Comprehensive Terms

Generally, national planning agencies tend to think of the future as an extension, or an extrapolation, of the present; most of such planning (items 1 and 2) is short-term. Biased writers and planners will conceive of a single-alternative future, usually utopian or catastrophic. Increasingly, planners, policy-makers, and futures-thinkers are concerned with technological influences. At the international level, planners have taken on the task of and are leading the way toward comprehensive planning as a mode of action. These latter three modes of thinking about the future (items 3, 4 and 5) usually involve middle-to-long-range thinking. Comprehensive planning in the international context refers to two discrete operations: the promotion and implementation of overall planning within each organization's member states and the promotion and

implementation of global planning with a view to affecting its member states.

The cultural dimensions, as well as the short-comings, of national systems are seen more clearly than ever before. As a result, international organizations are working to set up international standards in education, as well as in other fields. The International Institute of Educational Planning (IIEP) of Unesco and the Center for Educational Research and Innovation (CERI) of the O.E.C.D. are only two examples of efforts in this direction. In April of this year, an International Seminar on the Future of Education was held in Madrid to discuss approaches to planning and ways of thinking about the future. The setting up of international standards was also in part the purpose of the first International Congress of Futures Research held in Oslo in 1968.

In many persons' minds planning is thought of as a tendency to try and force complex relationships into one mold or to perpetuate false dichotomies. And there is a truth in this at the national as well as the international levels. While speaking to sustain divergence, we persist in acting for consensus. Over a decade ago, in the Handbook of Adult Education in the United States (Knowles, ed., 1960), Paul Sheats stated that "Adult education can be used as an instrument of national control and enforced uniformity. Whether . . . it can be used to implement planned social change without destroying creative intuition and individual responsibility would thus seem to be one of the major issues of our time."

Other troubling issues in discussing the future of continuing education spring from the field's diversity, its current "marginality" and its proliferation of "equivalent" language. We speak of continuing education, the educational periphery, éducation permanente, out-of-school education, adult education, recurrent education and on and on with little distinction. And yet, each of these terms carries with it a slightly different meaning or emphasis. The literature about continuing education, like the field itself, ranges widely over a vast array of topics in a highly disorganized manner. And

most of this literature, as Coolie Vernon noted long ago (1960), is more timely than significant or great.

One of the compelling features about futures thinking in continuing education is that it forces us to reconsider our philosophies: to review our concepts of man and the world and consequently of what we mean by purposes, organizational characteristics, programs and methodologies. It makes us see the field in terms of what might be called the "continuing education complex"--including programs within and outside schools as well as the institutions which serve and are served by these programs. We begin to see the field's diversity as one of its major assets as well as a liability. Futures thinking also helps us to realize that terms such as "marginal" and "peripheral" are value judgments as well as observations.

Futures thinking, in short, forces us to look at objectives and, thereby, at methods and values. "Whether he knows it or not," contended C. Wright Mills, "the line-up of a man's problems--how he states them and what priority he assigns them--rests upon methods, theories and values." Some thinkers insist that without an awareness of objectives we cannot really be fully alive and active in a conscious way. As Paulo Freire puts it: "The action of men without objectives, whether the objectives are right or wrong, mythical or demythologized, naive or critical, is not praxis, though it may be orientation in the world. And not being praxis, it is action ignorant both of its own process and its aim. <u>The interrelation of the awareness of aim and of process is the basis for planning action</u>, which implies methods, objectives and value options." (Italics mine)

By calculating, extrapolating, or "inventing" the future of continuing education, each of us in fact may learn much about our present needs, as well as the direction we want to pursue. By so doing, we may arrive at the conclusion, as Phillip Coombs of the International Council for Educational Development (ICED) has done, that non-formal education is imperative to promote rural and agricultural development. Or, we may come to predict, with Alan Knox, the future needs of graduate programs. Or, we may forecast with Malcolm

Knowles "the time when counselling will be the central integrative function of the entire field" of continuing education.

By futures-casting we are forced to look at the way we arrive at our vision or design of the future. There are several major techniques now being used in futures-casting which are provocative in approach. These involve everything from personal "mind-shifts" to extensive and comprehensive simulation exercises. The major "tools" for the formulation of futures environments are known as: the Delphi, the Cross-Impact Matrix, Scenario Construction and Futures History, Value-Shift Assessment, and Future History Analysis and Review.* (See: Sandow, 1971) The function of each of these tools is described briefly as follows:

1) The Delphi Technique elicits and refines the opinions of a group of individuals to arrive at "convergent" or "polarized" views of one or more possible future events.

2) The Cross-Impact Matrix program (designed by the Institute for the Future) attempts to deal with the problem of interdependency of events.

3) Scenario Construction and Future Histories are expository and reflective methods which help a writer to clarify his feelings about causality and to examine discrete moments in future time.

4) Value-shift Assessment may be part of a scenario or futures history, or may simply attend the examination of goals by an individual planner. Presumably, a goal set in future will be accompanied by certain value-shifts that should be predicted and studied against the goal set for the future.

5) Future History Analysis and Review, which is similar to the Program Evaluation and Review Technique (PERT), examines the array of events and activities that may cause the achievement of a goal at a moment in a long-term future.

To these we might add the more "traditional" forms of trend extrapolation.

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* Examples of a Cross-Impact Matrix and a Scenario Construction are attached. as Annex I and II. The Matrix was developed by Stuart Sandow with other members of the Educational Policy Research Center in Syracuse, New York. The Scenario Construction is one I completed for a graduate course in Spring 1971 given by Warren Ziegler, Co-Director of the Educational Policy Research Center and Adjunct Professor of Adult Education at Syracuse University. The course was titled "Futures in Adult Education" and represents a "first" of its kind.

Educational planning is too important to be treated in the haphazard, "urgent" manner of most bureaucracies. It is too complex to be dealt with only through "meetings of experts." Whether the aim is specific planning or the development of, and choice between, alternative futures, it is imperative to look at our "tools" for choice and, consequently, at our explicit and implicit objectives and our built-in values. In short, we must move the debate over continuing education from solely an operational context into an intellectual environment that attempts to foresee what our present operations portend. At the same time, we must be careful what we ask for; we just might get it.

The future of continuing education is shaping up rapidly, so rapidly that its <u>futures</u> must not be ignored. Continuing education today is more than merely an interpretation of the educational process and a stop-gap guide to action. It is time to think seriously as to whether we mean to look at continuing education as a complement to school education, as a replacement (or substitute) for schooling, as an educative factor per se, as an alternative to schooling, or simply as a more efficient formula for education than the schools. There is growing interest and influence of governments in continuing education. In mid-year 1972, Unesco plans to hold its Third International Conference on Adult Education. It is not too soon to begin to review and formulate futures for continuing education from which to choose the future we prefer so that we may better know what to aim for in the arenas where futures are made. Futures literature may be valuable in helping us to review our preferences and directions more systematically.

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Annex I -- Cross-Impact Matrix

FEDERAL POLICY OPTIONS/GOALS
POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION 1970-85

(a model)

| | Federal Subsidy to Students 1 | Fed. Subsidy to Institutions 2 | Significant Curricula Alternatives 3 | Fed. Support Based on Random Admission 4 | Fed. Support for Universal H.E. 5 | No Discrimination by Race/Creed/Color/ Credential 6 | Fed. Support of Job Training 7 | Equal Funding for Higher & Cont. Ed. 8 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Federal Subsidy for any Post-Secondary Education Direct to Student 1 | ■ | | | | | | | |
| Federal Support to Post-Secondary Education Direct to Institutions 2 | | ■ | | | | | | |
| Federal Funding of Significant Alternative Curricula: Meditation, Communal Living, Non-Violent Political Behavior 3 | | | ■ | | | | | |
| Federal Aid to Post-Secondary Institutions Contingent on their Use of Random Admissions Procedures 4 | | | | ■ | | | | |
| Federal Guarantee of 15 Yrs. of Education Over Life Span With No Regard to Sequence 5 | | | | | ■ | | | |
| No Job Discrimination Based on Race/ Creed/Color/Credential 6 | | | | | | ■ | | |
| Federal Subsidy for Any and All Job-Related Training or Education 7 | | | | | | | ■ | |
| Equal Federal Support to Continuing Education and Higher Education 8 | | | | | | | | ■ |

Annex II -- Scenario

# A FUTURES SCENARIO FOR THE FIELD OF EDUCATION WITH EMPHASIS ON OUT-OF-SCHOOL EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

## I. Introduction

I have determined to set up this futures scenario starting with what seems to me a predictable need, then a news event in future underlining that need, a resultant social value shift, and then the citing of a goal statement, a news event describing a program to meet the need, and a resultant personal value shift. Also, I have decided to deal with a reasonably immediate future extending into a middle-range future prediction.

In order to approach (in a way which is satisfactory for me) the future I have in mind, it seems mandatory that certain preliminary percepts and concepts be stated if only in telegraphic form. The following preliminary statements are meant to help with an understanding of why and how I arrive at the need I perceive and the goal I conceive for what is, in my view, an important slice of the future.

## II. Statements:

1. In given situations or when evaluating specifics we tend to institute a hierarchy of values. Once this hierarchy of values is established, it is a simple matter to start to think of them as existing independently of any situation. It then seems clear that all we must do in order to solve problems or meet needs is to discover the nature of this hierarchy and apply it to situations as they arise. This is a basic philosophical and policy fallacy! It is a fallacy which results from neglect of the context of a situation. (For example, aid and volunteer programs often impose a hierarchy of values on the client groups without paying full attention to client-group differences.) The consequence of this fallacy is that it leads to pat formulas and predecided answers to what may seem to be similar, but are nevertheless changing, problems.

2. There are so many "ifs, ands and buts" about prediction that it is near impossible to account for all causes and effects of any one future statement. We tend to think of preventing, adapting to or aggressing for a future event. I would like to suggest that these words are so interrelated we may want to look at them in two different lights. If we aim to prevent a "foreseen" future event from occurring, then we will aggress for its prevention while adapting to other concommittent developments. If we aim to adapt to a "foreseen" future event, then we aggress for it by not acting to prevent it or by not taking action to create a different future event. If we aim to aggress for a "foreseen" future event, then we will want to prevent certain things from happening while electing to adapt to others. This is not to suggest that there is no distinction between the terms: preventive, adaptive and aggressed for; certainly the orientation assumed and the action to be adopted will be different. Nevertheless, I do not want to loose sight of the fact that while actively choosing one position, I am also passively (or unconsciously) taking up other positions as well. All this is to say that while aiming to aggress for the future/a future I have chosen, I recognize that I am also aiming to prevent other future possibilities and that implicit to these aims in another aim which is that of adapting to still other future developments. Consequently, in my scenario, I am aware that while dealing with social, educational and psychological concerns, I am not specifically encompassing political, economic or scientific and technological possibilities.

3. Implicit in the scenario is the conviction that the "education complex"--meaning school institutions and out-of-school programs that service them and those that benefit from them--will continue. By this I do not mean that it will remain the same. Rather, I should say that the education complex will continue but with some major and numerous minor changes brought about as a result of innovation, political and social pressures, and other (e.g., technological, scientific and psychological) developments. The scenario, then, deals with what is believed to be a major change in the system if it is to improve rather than fall into further crisis.

III. General Conviction:

Education is different things to different people. But, education also means different things to different groups of people. In other words, there are not only diverse but pluralistic ways of looking at education. Writers and thinkers in the field of education (as well as in other fields) tend to have disparate ideas as to what is the main purpose and aim of education. As Aristotle in his Politics stated: "The existing practice (of education) is perplexing; no one knows on what principle it should proceed--should the (utilitarian), or should virtue, or should higher knowledge, be the aim of our training; all three opinions have been entertained. . . . about the means there is no agreement." In the large, we think of "education" as being gained from parents, peers, schools, out-of-school activities, work and, in fact, the gamut of life's situations with which the individual comes in contact. Even within the school, there is considerable and growing debate as to the objectives and methods, the why and how of educating. Some choose to think that education aims at the transmission of culture, socialization of individuals, and fostering of self (or historical) identity. This is helpful but ignores the controversy and conflict in the field of education. For me, it has been useful to think of education (whether via parents, peers, school or work) as being that which promotes three basic transfers:

the transfer of certain ideas
the transfer of certain skills
the transfer of certain values

These transfers are generally aimed at serving to maintain and advance current concepts of civilization. When a person is encouraged (taught) to accept (though he or she may revolt against) an idea, a skill or a value, and this encouragement has influenced the person in one way or another, then education has taken place. It may be negative or positive education, depending on our personal judgment. Socialization, after all, is an idea, a skill and a value. So is the transfer of culture or the promotion of a self identity. Off paper, however, skills, ideas and values are conscious and unconscious reality. They are separable only intellectually. A man who accepts to learn how to put cars together and to become a mechanic has choosen more than a skill; he has accepted a value and an idea about life. His choice is as valid

and as socially necessary (today) as that of a man who chooses to be a politician. The difference is in our judgment that the arena of work that a politician chooses is more important since social development is more necessary than having a car fixed. I see society as having a "hierarchy of value" jobs. Society tends, whether it likes to admit it or not, to be elitist. People accept (learn) a value about ideas and skills. This does not, of course, preclude our having a mechanic as a friend though it certainly operates against it.

To plan for education with the notion that "education is different things to different people," it is imperative that we think in more than institutional or systems terms. The relationships that take place within or outside of institutions are as important as the institutions themselves and, in fact, determine whether these institutions are carrying out the functions they claim to be promoting. Also, it is important to understand these relationships and the concomitant "learning situations" so that we may better understand what these institutions mean to ourselves and what they may mean to other persons. What I am saying in a round-about way here is that the purpose of an institution, role relationships and the learning relationships they promote, as well as the personal needs and desires of an individual, must all be taken into consideration if we are to develop an education complex which has individual and not just an imposed social meaning.

IV. General Need Statement:

The "democratization of education" means, for all intents and purposes today, the democratization of school education. There is a financial crisis occurring with greater and greater impact at the post-secondary and higher levels of the school education system. In the academic year 1970-71, some 40,000 applicants were turned away from the doors of the State Universities of New York. Predictions are that this number will increase this coming year and continue to increase over the next ten years. It would appear that we need to re-think the how of democratization of education.

V. Specific Need Statement:

Democratization of school education is not a panacea for society but a Pandora's box. If we are further to promote democratization of education, then we must think in terms of the education complex rather than limiting our view to the school system. We must understand that "multiple goals, multiple skills and multiple measurements" is a doctrine as well as a concept and that this doctrine cannot be implemented only within the framework of the schools. We need, then, a counselling system made up of members from all corners of the education complex utilizing experts whose commitment is to getting the right education for the individual education-seeker.

VI. News Event Regarding Need:

April 1974-The universities are facing financial breakdown. Classrooms are already overcrowded. Frustration and the drop-out rate are increasing. New applicants are being turned away by the thousands.

The President of the United States along with the Secretaries of HEW, Labor, Interior, and the Director of OEO met today with public and private university presidents, business executives, educational planners from the military, ETV directors, and adult education authorities to discuss the impending social crisis which is being brought on by the inability of the colleges, universities and community colleges to meet the growing wave of applicants for entrance.

The President proposed that all post-secondary education seekers be placed in "learning situations," but not necessarily schools. The President spoke of the "education complex" as encompassing business and industry, military programs and other non-school institutions and programs. His proposal then includes the establishment of a new kind of counselling service outside of the school administration and possibly linked to the Office of Economic Opportunity which will stream education-seekers into available education opportunities, whether school or non-school. The President attempted to convince the conference as well as the public that "specific jobs count as much as abstract degrees."

Many critics of the President's position saw this as perpetuating elitism and promoting "technical education." Given the present financial crisis, however, it seems likely that the President's proposal will meet with general approval.

VII. Social Value Shift:

September 1974-Thousands of letters have been pouring into Congressmen's offices approving the President's proposal to set up an "educational placement service" for those seeking post-secondary education. Although many professional educators are concerned about the meaning of this proposal for the school establishment and democracy, a large number of parents and students are applauding the proposal.

Moreover, businesses and industry have shown an eagerness, despite added costs, to bring young men into their plants for "cooperative and other technical types of educational programs involving technical and professional training." Some businesses are already investing even greater sums into classrooms, AV materials and the training of trainers.

The military is also beginning to advertise its job-training prowess rather than its "see the world" jargon. The computer-administered educational programs which began as early as 1968 are now being stepped up. What with more and more universities shying away from military contracts in recent years, the military has built up its own research apparatus and is increasingly in need of qualified personnel.

Mr. General Public has reason to be pleased. As the degrees supplied by colleges, universities and community colleges, universities and community colleges have become less and less honored and, as jobs have become scarcer in many "academic" fields, more and more people are turning to the open job-market for employment. As this happens, on-the-job training is once again taking on the significance it had before the rush to higher education institutions.

VIII. Goal Statement:

To provide a wide variety of educational opportunities at the post-secondary level for people (young or not so young) within the education complex.

IX. News Event Regarding Program.

November 1976-The Educational Placement Service (EPS) has again worked feverishly over the summer months and during the month of September to place the increasing number of applicants for post-secondary education. There is a disheartening tendency, according to counsellors in the EPS, for applicants to reject streaming into out-of-school training programs including those offered by businesses, industry and the military. However, as one EPS spokesman put it, "We are independent counsellors attempting to hold our preferences in abeyance in order to find out what are the realistic possibilities and needs of applicants who have not been able to enter the university. As many of the applicants are from poor educational and social backgrounds, however, there is a tendency to label EPS as reactionary. This is certainly not the case as the applicants themselves realize once they see that our interest is not to place them in a non-school environment, but rather to find opportunities according to their interests and applitudes."

The colleges, universities and community colleges remain overcrowded, but there is no question but that the EPS has relieved the situation whereby unsuccessful applicants were thrown back into their educational ghettos. Today, nobody requesting entrance to a higher education institution need go without higher education training, at least in the technical and specialist skills. And technical education, it should be remembered in modern parlance, refers to white-collar work paying high salaries. Prestigious jobs are now attainable again via routes other than that of formal higher education institutions.

Today the EPS is to the Employment Service what the Learning Force is to the Labor Force.

X. Personal Value Statement:

December 1977-The problem of planning for diversity (individual differences) and planning for pluralism (group differences) still concerns me. Throughout my life I have tended to conform generally and yet in some areas of my life and at specific times have taken the nonconformist role. Therefore, while revering social cohesiveness as a value, I also have a deep respect for the dissenting individual.

My ideal in life has been to combine successfully a life made up of three parts: administrative responsibility, teaching relationships and writing. I have arranged my life (and been allowed to arrange my life) so that I am able and encouraged to participate in all three domains. My life is made up of knowledge inputs and outputs, action, and affective relationships that are satisfying.

At present, I am working on a consultant basis with the ESP. I proposed three months ago that the EPS speak to students already in college about their careers and whether they are headed for upward or downward mobility--the object being to reduce dropping-out by promoting "educational mobility," e.g., from college to non-school and on-the-job programs. I have also recommended that counsellor-scouts be sent to the thousands of communes across the nation to determine: 1) whether some communers might not want to return to a more formal education situation, and 2) whether communers might be needing specifically skilled people to promote their different enterprises.

My family life remains basically the same. My older son is now a "senior" on scholarship in a private university; my two daughters are in high school and my younger son is just terminating elementary school. They keep me in touch with the realities they perceive and give a special balance to my own perceptions that my peers and mentors cannot give.

I am now 43 years old. I no longer regret that I am not good at the things that I am not good at, but concentrate on areas of talent. The notion

of death bothers me less now than in earlier years; I suppose I am too busy trying to help others learn to live their own lives. The confusion and fatigue of my earlier years strike me now as a kind of purgatory, or difficult growth stage, that I have gone through. The hidden mind is understood but not catered to as formerly and the visible, or surface, mind is highly active. I recall that this process began while I was in France working in 1968 at Unesco in the Department of Out-of-School Education, and continued throughout much of the continuing-education period I spent at Syracuse University. Though I see this period of process as a stage, I also am able now to see it as a vital, liberating (distance-giving) period of my life. I would not be so involved in the maintenance, improving or changing of the environments around me if I had continued with the implicit value I had prior to this time, which was: economic and social survival without any actively meaningful larger concerns.

The following quote from Dewey's On Experience, Nature and Freedom sums up my thinking and reflects my behavior: "The only power the organism possesses to control its own future depends upon the way its present responses modify changes which are taking place in its medium."

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